

ECSE FAQs

Which children are participating in this program evaluation?

All children who will be kindergarten-eligible for the 2005-06 school year in early childhood special education, Missouri Preschool Project and Title I Preschool programs will be participating. More information can be found at http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/earlychild/MPP/Observational_Assessment_Information.pdf

Why are we doing this assessment in ECSE?

To acquire baseline data on ECSE effectiveness. The US Department of Education requires DESE to submit annual performance reports (APRs) on special education. Last spring, OSEP (the Office of Special Education Programs) at the USDoE, directed states to answer the following question:

Are early language/communication, early literacy, and social-emotional skills improving for preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services?

A similar question was asked about Part C/First Steps services for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

At the National Accountability Conference in New Orleans on October 4, 2004, the USDoE announced a proposed plan to address the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. The objective listed was that "Preschool children with disabilities will receive special education and related services that result in increased skills that enable them to succeed in school."

The State of Missouri has PK standards -- and special educators were involved in creating those standards -- but no outcomes specific to the effectiveness of ECSE. DESE can report numbers of children exiting ECSE or not eligible for school-age categorical services -- and this reflects that ECSE was effective

for those students, as they no longer require services or no longer have an eligible disabling condition.

However, there's no data on what children receiving ECSE services know and can do. This observational assessment will provide a baseline toward that, and is highly correlated with the PK standards the State has for all children in PK settings.

What is the DESE doing about ECSE outcomes?

This school year, DESE will be bringing together ECSE stakeholders including parents, ECSE educators, First Steps personnel and elementary and early childhood educators to determine the state's ECSE outcomes. This stakeholder group will be working with the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, which is sponsored by OSEP. At this time, we can't speak about what those outcomes will look like: parity with non-disabled peers? Entry/exit assessment? Achievement of IEP goals (typically done by states with very few districts or children)? Some combination of these?

It is anticipated that ECSE outcomes will complement PK standards without replacing them.

What about the kids who only receive a therapy service, such as speech, OT, or PT? Do we include these students?

Yes. All ECSE children who will be kindergarten-eligible for the 2005-06 school year will be assessed.

Who should do the observations for these students?

That is a district decision. Obviously, it should be someone who sees the child across the school year. Typically, this is going to be the therapist or teacher providing the ECSE itinerant service. In some cases, a PAT parent educator may be appropriate, if the parent educator is actively involved with the particular family.

So do I do the observations during therapy?

IEP requirements must be met. If it says "20 minutes of speech services," then that must be provided. In talking with speech pathologists, most indicate that they can include much of the areas covered by the observational assessment (i.e., can address colors during therapy for stuttering).

If there are areas that can't easily be addressed, such as playing with others, parents might provide information from the private preschool provider or perhaps the child could have a play date scheduled for before or after the therapy session and the therapist could observe the child's interaction in that way -- these are only suggestions. Districts may meet this requirement in multiple ways.

This assessment tool is not normed for parental report.

What happens if I get new students in my class during the school year?

Children who enter ECSE services and will be K-eligible for 2005-06 by March 1, 2005 will be included in the observational assessment. On the back of the bubble sheet, report the amount of special education services that the child has received by the end of the school year. We will be able to disaggregate based on these students.

What happens if a child exits ECSE or moves during the school year?

a. If a child exits ECSE after January 1, 2005, include them in the observational assessment. You'll have both the data used to determine the child no longer eligible for services and also the observations you've conducted between now and the date they exit services.

b. If the child moves out of state after January 1, 2005, use the same process.

For completing the bubble sheet, identify the funding source as ECSE, and indicate the child is NOT currently receiving services (situation a & b), but go to the back and indicate the amount of special education the child will have received at the end of the school year (or by the date of exit if the child moved

out of state), and whether s/he received early intervention services.

c. If the child moves in-state between January 1 and March 2, 2005 and you know they are continuing ECSE services, you may want to forward your observational notes to the receiving district, as they will fall under the "what happens if I get a new student" category for the receiving district.

In this case, do not complete a form on the child.

d. If they move after March 1, 2005, complete the assessment with the data you have.

In this case, fill out the form as if the child was currently in your district.

Is permission/notification required for this observational assessment?

No. The observational assessment is being used for program evaluation at the state level and across programs for children with and without disabilities. No parental permission is required.

What needs to be on the child's IEP?

Nothing needs to be included on the child's IEP. IEPs must include information about the student's participation in statewide assessment, which refers to academic performance assessment, such as the MAP. This is a program evaluation tool for use at the state level and across programs for children with and without disabilities.

If the child is moving into categorical services for kindergarten, and we know this when we're completing the bubble sheet, what do we mark?

Go ahead and mark the child's categorical disability. This will facilitate disaggregation of data. Be sure, though, to mark the current ECSE amount of services being provided in accordance with the IEP.

I have lots of kids with severe disabilities. How will their performance reflect on my district?

This is a state-level program evaluation tool. No individual performance levels are determined. The State must provide full-funding of ECSE services. We will be using the statewide data for federal reporting requirements, in budget discussions with the state legislature, and for analysis of professional development training needs.

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